

Solid Waste Division

MISSION STATEMENT: *The King County Solid Waste Division protects human health and the environment by providing quality services that responsibly manage the County's solid wastes.*

WHAT WE DO

The Solid Waste Division provides environmentally responsible transfer and disposal services for residents and businesses in King County. The transfer and disposal system includes the 920-acre Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, eight transfer stations, and two rural drop boxes for residential and non-residential self-haul customers and commercial haulers. All services are funded from tip fees paid at transfer stations and at the landfill by self-haul customers and commercial haulers.

Equally important, the Solid Waste Division works to find new ways to reduce waste and expand upon its award-winning recycling programs. The highest priority of the Division's overall solid waste management strategy is to reduce the amount of material that is disposed, thus conserving natural and renewable resources.

- The quantity of household hazardous waste collected by the Wastemobile was up 31 percent;
- 49 Special Recycling Events were organized in partnership with suburban cities to collect materials not handled under curbside recycling programs;
- The Grasscycling Program exceeded mulching mower sales goals by 16 percent with 3,400 mowers sold, and exceeded trade-in goals by 24 percent with 3,100 gas-powered mowers recycled;
- Nearly 50,000 King County families recycled their Christmas trees in the Division's Tree-Cycling Program;
- Compost training programs for farms and businesses were initiated to help manage organic waste, which comprises about one-third of waste disposed in King County;
- The Division distributed to 240 school teachers King County's Emmy Award-winning documentary "Natural Connections."

YEAR 2000 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Waste reduction and recycling

Last year, Solid Waste Division efforts to increase waste reduction and recycling among residents, businesses and schools in the region were extremely successful. Among the major successes:

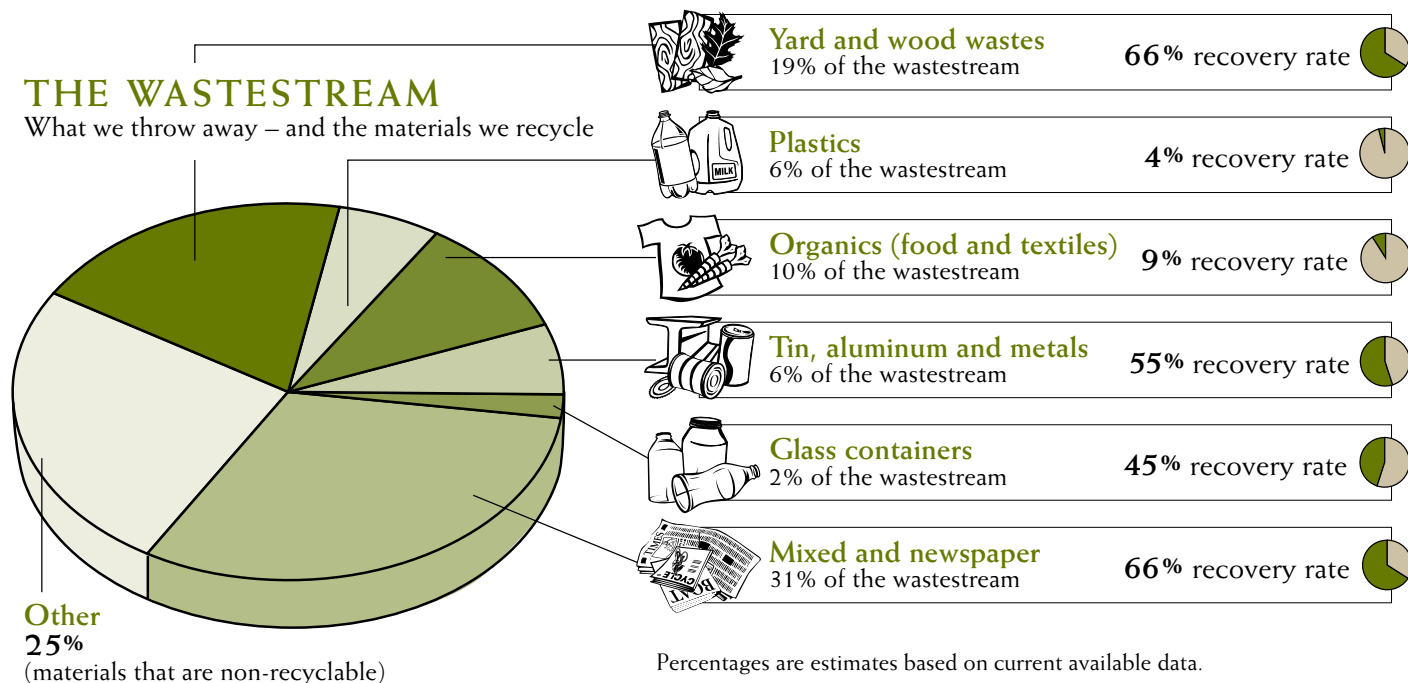
- The Division launched the Computer Recovery Program, which recycled more than 30 tons of computer equipment likely bound for the landfill;
- Nearly 6,000 more households signed up for curbside recycling;

Major maintenance and facility improvements

With the opening of the \$20 million Landfill Area 5 at Cedar Hills in 1999, the Solid Waste Division finished the closure of Landfill Area 4 in 2000. The phased closure, begun in 1997, included installation of the final cover, new landfill gas collection, and new leachate and stormwater management facilities. The Division also significantly upgraded its busy Bow Lake and Houghton transfer station sites. The Houghton site in Kirkland received improvements to its scalehouse foundation and drainage systems, while the Bow Lake location in Tukwila received improvements to its garbage pit. Between them, the two transfer stations collect nearly 300,000 tons of garbage per year.

THE WASTESTREAM

What we throw away – and the materials we recycle



Percentages are estimates based on current available data.

Community Litter Clean Up

The Solid Waste Division cleaned up litter and illegal dumpsites on public land and waterways at more than 30 sites under its Community Litter Clean Up Program. In addition to the clean up and recycling of nearly 100 tons of debris, one of the ongoing successes of the program is the partnerships fostered between Solid Waste and landowners, public agencies and non-profit organizations.

Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan

The Solid Waste Division issued the Draft 2000 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, which outlines how the region's garbage and recycling services will be managed over the next 20 years. The plan was developed after months of gathering input from the cities in the planning area, private waste haulers, Division employees, and the general public. Major elements of the plan include:

- Expanding waste reduction and recycling programs, especially for the organic materials that make up a substantial portion of what is thrown away;
- Making use of Cedar Hills Regional Landfill until it reaches its permitted capacity in 2012 and then exporting the region's garbage to an out-of-county landfill;
- Continuing to look at options for upgrading transfer facilities so they are better equipped for exporting wastes and efficiently handling the region's customers;
- Keeping rates stable and low.

Competitiveness Project

The Solid Waste Division launched the Competitiveness Project in 2000 to examine how the Division can deliver improved efficiency and increase value to customers. The project looks at how the Division does business and compares it to other agencies, both public and private. In its first year, the Division developed performance measures and benchmarks to see where it is today, compare it to where it wants to be, and to track its progress. The Division is involving employees in plans for process improvements and possible expansion of services to help it become more efficient and effective.

OUTLOOK

As part of its 2001 work plan, the Solid Waste Division will work to achieve adoption of the Final 2000 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, complete work on the Competitiveness Project, offer a pilot program to collect household hazardous waste at a transfer station, develop proposals for the use of land-fill gas as an energy source, sponsor a county-wide task force on litter and illegal dumping, introduce a pilot program that uses incentive coupons to guide customer behavior, and more.

The challenge ahead is to continue delivering safe, sanitary, efficient and cost-effective solid waste and recycling services for a growing population. The Solid Waste Division is committed to the conservation of natural and renewable resources, rate stability, and the protection of public health through sound solid waste management practices.